291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "l@balaba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular [291] among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

[292] The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämīs", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej ṭäbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämīs" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it embroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämīs"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[83] The "qämīs" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ter. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitoretomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wəshəla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

[831]

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "ənta" (from "ənnənätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the twin"? The proverb says:

845 539

"The mother of twins,

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 831 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä mätän därrasä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalahal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Tämqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 by her spindle" ("barashay baenzert"), with their pooled property and strength. In front of the confessor-priest, the groom extinguishes a light, saying: "May God extinguish me like this flame, if I break my oath to her". He gives the mize, if he can afford it, a neck-cord with a silver cross or ring on it, which the latter places around the bride's neck. For the groom does not touch the bride at her parental shelter.

Permission is finally given by the bride's elders to leave, and her spokesman proclaims: "Our daughter we herewith give to your son. Haile Selassye yemut".

The Senaar mule is quickly saddled, and after the groom has mounted, the heavily veiled bride is lifted behind him by the mize, so that she clasps the groom's waist. She is wearing jodphurs as noblewomen do when riding. Waving sticks and shouting war cries, the escort runs before and on both sides of the couple, lighting the way with resinous torches.

Arrived at the "dass" of the groom, the bride sits with him in a corner, flanked by the everpresent "mize", while loud boasting, "hotu" jumping, "fukkara" boasting, beer-drinking and feasting continue until about 3A.M. About an hour before that, the section in which the bride and groom are sitting is curtained off by means of togas, so that they can sleep together in privacy. Gradually the other celebrants drop off to sleep, heavy with beer, around the fire, all over the "dass", like a guard of honor for the bridal couple. Some of the young men, "gobaz" amuse themselves with teasing games, such as "mock-court" in which the loser is fined beer or honey or a goat (footnote 84); or with sexual buffoonery

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Footnote 84: In Harar, southwest Ethiopia, a mock-lawsuit is held in which the loser must provide the drinks for a week after the wedding. See- Leslau: A Wedding Lawsuit in Harar. (Bibl)

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 [331] such as imitating the coitus of a donkey by holding a stick between the legs like a donkey's penis, and two other sticks held vertically to symbolize the vulva, teasing the bridegroom with enacted awkwardness until the actors find the "entrance". But finally the young men follow their elders in deep sleep.

The bride is expected to be, in fact contracted for, a virgin, "dengel". If she is not, there are several possibilities. The groom may lover her so much, or may be so ashamed, that he will keep silent. If he complains, the marriage can be forthwith annulled, in front of witnesses. In this case the shame is great for the bride, and she might be severely beaten. The "signs of virginity" are called "kebber" (lit. honor). The groom or the mize have the right to examine the clothing for blood, and the mize sometimes wave the trophy with glad shouting "The fortress is broken", even take the trophy with them 3 days later on their visit to the bride's family to bring the glad tidings, which honor the bride's kin, and collect their reward.

Since the bride is usually very young at her first marriage, she often suffers considerable pain. Usually she sits up quietly the next morning, in the corner of the "dass", with a serious face, while husband appears gay as the "victor". She is usually ashamed to cry out at night, among these strangers. When the sun rises, the groom and his friends walk some distance away to fulfill calls of nature, and discuss the "victory". When they return, the bride goes with some of the girls, but quietly and without boasting.

The following two or three nights, the bride and groom will have more privacy in a newly-built hut of their own, the "chagola" of "musherra" (honeymoon hut), because, as the saying goes, "the

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("tawaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

[186
578] Reply: "Begemdir", Question: "Where are you from?" Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."

"Shoa", "Land of liars and traitors."

"Gojjam", "Land of sorcerers (buda)."

"Gondar", "Gossipers and blabbermouths."

"Gurage", "Land of tricksters."

"Tigre", "Land of hotheads."

524 754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524 831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("yatota beddosh");

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ens").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.
534 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

● 831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shook with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

[842]

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "yäsäfär qal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "gola" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "yägola ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ens" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

793 831 Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Temqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

832 Love magic is widely and strongly believed in, particularly since it is supplied by the quasi-church functionary, the däbtära scribe. He is first called upon to write amulets, which are still respectable and, can be worn in outwardly visible containers, by women, for no one can know that the amulet is not directed against the devil. But the magic activities of the däbtära, secretly, go far beyond that.

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X 794 T16 [83] 753

Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

[753]

This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

[843]

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizé" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It [831] is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
● 831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost.

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĭllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizĕ*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizĕ*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizĕ*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizĕ*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizĕ* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambăr sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sĕt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*kutā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more complex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-sucking is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no matter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly replicate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show gratitude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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* The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.